

7

STORY &amp; ART BY MOTORO MASE

PARENTAL ADVISORY  
EXPLICIT  
CONTENT



STORY & ART BY MOTORO MASE

# IKIGAMI

THE ULTIMATE LIMIT

# IKIGAMI: THE ULTIMATE LIMIT

Volume 7

VIZ Signature Edition

Story and Art by **MOTORO MASE**

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# IKIGAMI

THE ULTIMATE LIMIT

VOL. **7** STORY & ART BY MOTORO MASE





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...WAS  
DEvised TO  
MAKE OUR  
PEOPLE  
APPRECIATE  
THE VALUE  
OF LIFE.

THE  
NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
ACT...

ONE IN A THOUSAND  
SYRINGES CONTAINS  
A NANOCAPSULE  
THAT CAUSES  
THE RECIPIENT  
TO DIE SOMETIME  
BETWEEN THE AGES  
OF 18 AND 24.



ALL CITIZENS  
UNDERGO  
NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
IMMUNIZA-  
TION IN  
THE FIRST  
GRADE.



MOST  
OF THEM  
FACE  
DEATH  
HAVING  
LOST ALL  
HOPE.

THE DATE IS  
PREDETERMINED,  
BUT THE YOUNG  
PEOPLE LEARN  
OF THEIR FATE  
ONLY 24  
HOURS BEFORE  
DEATH.

...AND  
WONDER  
WHO THEY  
HAVE TO  
THANK  
FOR THE  
LIFE  
THEY'VE  
HAD.

BUT  
SOME  
LOOK  
BACK  
AT THE  
PAST...

池 写真館



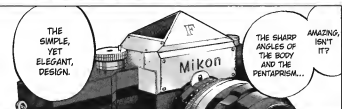
Episode 13 Photo of the Deceased Act 1





\*Ikeyama Photo Studio









HMM  
HMP



...IS  
BRINGING  
OUT A  
PERSON'S  
CHARAC-  
TER...

THE  
ESSENCE  
OF  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY  
...



UM...  
MR.  
IKE-  
YAMA?



OKAY.

I'LL  
ENLARGE  
THIS  
PHOTO AND  
DISPLAY  
IT.

YOU  
SHOULD  
BE  
HEADING  
HOME.

OH,  
IS THE  
HOUR  
UP?



WHEN I  
GROW  
UP...

...CAN  
I WORK  
HERE?





GIVEN YOUR HEART CONDITION...



TAKA'S A GOOD KID.





SIX  
YEARS  
LATER



ALL THE  
OTHER  
PHOTO  
STUDIOS ARE  
SWITCHING  
TO DIGITAL.

IKEYAMA-  
SAN, YOU  
REALLY  
SHOULD GET  
A DIGITAL  
DEVELOPER.

Ikeyama Photo Studio



...

I  
HATE  
IT.

DIGITAL  
IS JUST  
AS  
GOOD.

IF YOU  
KEEP  
USING  
ANALOG,  
YOU'LL  
LOSE  
BUSINESS.



BESIDES, NO  
ONE KNOWS  
FOR SURE  
HOW LONG  
DIGITAL  
PRINTS WILL  
LAST.

IF YOU  
DIGITALLY  
DEVELOP  
FILM TAKEN  
WITH AN  
ANALOG  
CAMERA...

...YOU  
MISS  
ALL THE  
SUBTLE  
TONE  
VARIATIONS.

IT MAKES  
MORE  
SENSE THAN  
WORRYING  
ABOUT  
TAKING CARE  
OF FILM.



IF YOU  
SAVE THE  
DATA, YOU  
CAN MAKE  
AS MANY  
PRINTS AS  
YOU WANT.

SIGH...  
BUT MOST  
CAMERAS  
ARE DIGITAL  
NOW.



...BUT THEY  
REWARD  
YOU FOR  
THE EFFORT  
YOU PUT  
INTO THEM.

ANALOG  
CAMERAS  
DO REQUIRE  
KNOWLEDGE  
AND SKILL...



BUT  
...

I WILL  
NEVER  
OWN A  
DIGITAL  
CAMERA.



...STOPS  
WORKING  
AFTER  
A FEW  
YEARS.

BUT A  
DIGITAL  
CAMERA...

AND EVEN AFTER  
50 YEARS, AN  
ANALOG CAMERA  
CAN STILL TAKE  
HIGH-QUALITY  
PHOTOGRAPHS.



...



THAT'S  
NOT A  
CAMERA

...

...IT'S  
A TOY.

A close-up of an older man with a mustache and a receding hairline, smiling.

IT'S  
ALMOST  
TIME,  
HM?

OH,  
TAKA.  
YOU CAME  
TO SEE  
ME?

A large close-up of a young man with dark, spiky hair, looking slightly to the side with a gentle smile.

MR.  
IKEYAMA,  
THANKS  
FOR  
EVERY-  
THING.

YEP.

A small panel showing a person standing in a room, looking towards a counter or desk.

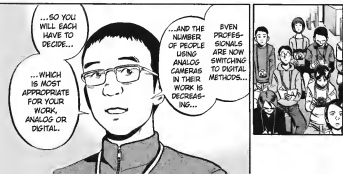
BUT  
THIS  
IS FOR  
YOU.

I'M SHOOTING  
A BASEBALL  
TOURNAMENT  
TOMORROW,  
SO I CAN'T  
SEE YOU  
OFF.





\*Photograph Visual Technical School







WHY  
NOT,  
KENICHI?

CHIAKI,  
TAKAAKI  
DOESN'T  
HAVE TO  
WORRY  
ABOUT  
THAT.



YEAH, I  
GUESS  
SO...



RIGHT,  
TAKAAKI?

...SO HE  
DOESN'T  
HAVE  
TO THINK  
ABOUT  
WHETHER  
HE'S  
GOING TO  
LOOK  
FOR A  
JOB  
OR WORK  
FREELANCE.

HE'S  
TAKING  
OVER A  
PHOTO  
STUDIO...



IF YOU  
STICK WITH  
ANALOG,  
YOU'LL  
EVENTUALLY  
BE LEFT  
BEHIND.

BUT EVEN  
MOST PHOTO  
STUDIOS  
ARE DIGITAL  
THESE DAYS.







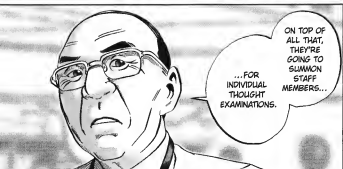
FOUR  
YEARS  
LATER.  
THE  
PRESENT.

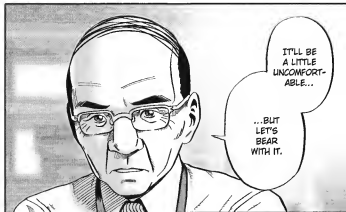
\*Musashigawa Ward Office



YOU KNOW,  
THAT  
THEY'RE  
GOING TO  
ESTABLISH  
...

...A  
THOUGHT-  
EXAMINATION  
BOARD IN  
THE WARD  
OFFICE.







...RIGHT NOW,  
I'M TAKING A  
WAIT-AND-SEE  
APPROACH TO  
WHAT OUR  
COUNTRY  
IS DOING.



WHEN NANAOKO  
KUBO SAVED  
MY LIFE, MY  
THOUGHTS  
ABOUT NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
BECAME  
CONFUSED...

...AND  
CONDEMN  
EVEN PEOPLE  
LIKE ME AS  
NATIONAL  
TRAITORS.



THE  
AUDITORS  
MIGHT  
TAKE A  
HARD  
LINE...

...I JUST  
NEED TO  
KEEP UP  
APPEAR-  
ANCES.



BUT  
IF  
THEY  
DO...



WHICH IS  
"BUSINESS  
AS  
USUAL."





Van: Stage Photos, Mizuka Photo







...BUT I  
GAVE UP  
ON THAT  
DREAM.



YEAH.

SO YOU  
CAN TAKE  
IT EASY  
FOR  
A WHILE.



OH, YOU'RE  
ON WINTER  
VACATION  
UNTIL THE  
TENTH.



I BET  
YOU'RE  
TAKING  
SOME  
GOOD  
PHOTOS.

HOW'S  
THAT  
CAMERA  
HOLDING  
UP?



I  
DOUBT  
THAT.



...SO  
SOPHISTI-  
GATED,  
TAKA

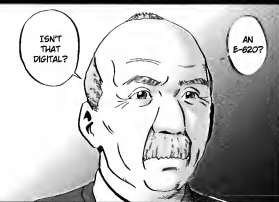
LIVING  
IN THE  
CITY HAS  
MADE  
YOU...



I GOT A  
DIFFERENT  
ONE.

MR.  
IKEYAMA,  
I'M...

...NOT  
USING  
THAT  
MIKON.







TO THEM,  
DIGITAL IS  
JUST A  
WAY TO  
MAKE  
MONEY.

THEY RATTLE  
ON ABOUT  
CONVENIENCE  
WHILE THEY  
ROB US  
BLIND.

...THE  
INDUSTRY  
CAME UP  
WITH TO  
SELL US  
MORE  
STUFF.

DIGITAL  
CAMERAS  
ARE  
JUST  
SOME-  
THING...

THEY'VE  
TAKEN OVER  
AND THE  
WORLD  
HAS GONE  
CRAZY.

CELL  
PHONES.  
COMPUTERS.  
THE  
INTERNET...

THAT'S  
WHY I  
WON'T RELY  
ON DIGITAL  
PRODUCTS  
AT ALL.

I CAN  
TEACH YOU  
ALL YOU  
NEED TO  
KNOW  
HERE AT--

QUIT THAT  
SCHOOL AS  
SOON AS  
POSSIBLE.

TAKA, I  
WOULDN'T  
MISLEAD YOU.  
TRUE PHOTO-  
GRAPHY MUST  
BE ANALOG.



...THIS  
SHOP  
WILL  
FAIL.

MR.  
IKEYAMA,  
IF YOU  
KEEP  
SAYING  
THAT...



...BUT SO  
I CAN GO  
ONLINE TO  
COMMUNICATE  
WITH THE  
LABS.

NOT JUST  
FOR IMAGE  
PROCESS-  
ING...

AND, OF  
COURSE,  
COMPUTERS.

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT?

AREN'T  
YOU  
**ALREADY**  
LOSING  
CUSTOMERS?

IF YOU  
DON'T, THIS  
SHOP IS  
BOUND FOR  
FINANCIAL  
RUIN!

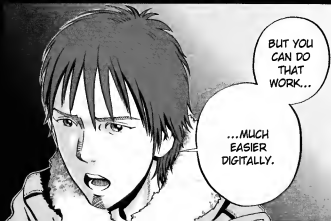
I  
WON'T  
ALLOW  
IT!

YOU DON'T  
UNDER-  
STAND  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY  
AT ALL!

DON'T  
ACT  
LIKE YOU  
KNOW  
EVERY-  
THING!

YOU DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
**BUSINESS**  
AT ALL!











...BUT IN THE  
HOSPITAL, HE  
WOULDN'T  
SAY A  
WORD  
TO ME.

HIS  
CONDITION  
WASN'T  
SERIOUS...



I DON'T  
HAVE ANY  
BUSINESS  
THERE  
ANYMORE  
ANYWAY.



I HAVEN'T  
SHOWN MY  
FACE AT  
THE PHOTO  
STUDIO  
SINCE THEN.

WITH DIGITAL  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY SO  
PREVALENT...  
ANALOG'S  
RARITY  
MAKES  
IT MORE  
VALUABLE.



BUT I  
CAN SEE  
THAT MR.  
IKEYAMA  
HAS A  
POINT.

BUT IT'S  
TOO  
LATE.



TO TELL  
THE TRUTH,  
I STILL  
WANT TO  
WORK  
AT THAT  
PHOTO  
STUDIO.





IT SURE WENT FAST. WE'RE ALREADY 23.  
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE REUNION.

OH, OKAY.

YEAH. WE'RE GONNA PUT PORTRAITS OF THE ALUMNI IN A BOOKLET...

...SO PREPARE A PICTURE OF YOURSELF.



I ASSUMED YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE OVER THAT LOCAL PHOTO STUDIO.

YOU KNOW, I'M SURPRISED YOU DECIDED TO STAY AND WORK HERE.



THE INCOME IS SO UNRELIABLE I COULD CRY.

MEANWHILE, I'M IN TRAINING AS A STUDIO ASSISTANT.



YOU'RE  
ON THE  
RIGHT  
TRACK,  
SO DON'T  
GIVE UP!

BUT YOU  
WANT  
TO BE A  
FREE-  
LANCER,  
RIGHT?



HA  
HA  
KEEP  
AT IT!

I DON'T  
HAVE ANY  
MONEY,  
BUT I  
HAVE A  
DREAM.

YEAH,  
I WON'T.



UM...  
TAKAAKI  
MORISAWA?



YES.



I'M HERE  
TO DELIVER  
AN IKIGAMI  
TO YOU.



of National Welfare

...only be able to collect the pension.

If you have been selected to die for  
the state was established to increase the  
value of the nation for the country.

You have been selected at random to die at the time indicated  
above. As a rule, your actions to the remaining 24 hours will not  
be affected with to any way however, any actions deemed  
to be a threat to the state will result in immediate execution.



TIME UNTIL DEATH:  
23 HOURS 59 MINUTES



Episode 13 Photo of the Deceased Act 2



of National Welfare

PM 1:00

if you have been selected to die for  
mum was established to increase the  
living an awareness of the value of  
role for the country.

HUH?  
AN  
IKIGAMI?

YOU  
REMEMBER  
CHIAKI?

THAT GIRL  
WHO WAS  
ALWAYS  
LECTURING  
YOU?

BUT I  
SUPPOSE  
IT'S WORTH  
IT JUST  
BEING A  
STUDIO  
MAN.

...BUT  
PLEASE  
SIGN  
HERE.

I'M  
SORRY...

SHE WAS  
ALWAYS SO  
RIGHTTEOUS...

...BUT  
SHE QUIT  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY.

UH...  
YEAH.



YOU  
NEVER  
KNOW  
WHAT WILL  
HAPPEN  
IN LIFE.

SO I  
SHOULD BE  
THANKFUL  
I CAN  
DO THIS  
WORK.



...BUT  
SHE  
REALLY  
WANTED  
TO DO  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY.

SHE GOT  
PREGNANT  
AND HAD  
TO GET  
MARRIED,  
SO IT  
COULDN'T BE  
HELPED...



MAY YOU  
REST IN  
PEACE.



TIME LEFT:  
22 HOURS 52 MINUTES

MOM...  
DON'T CRY.  
LISTEN  
TO ME...

...I  
TALKED  
TO THE  
PEOPLE  
AT WORK  
TOO.

YEAH  
...

I TALKED TO  
MY REALTOR,  
SO YOU AND  
DAD CAN  
TAKE CARE  
OF MY STUFF  
LATER...

YES  
...

BIP

OKAY...  
BYE.

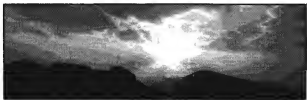
I'LL BE  
THERE IN  
ABOUT  
THREE  
HOURS.











Morisawa

TIME LEFT:  
17 HOURS 15 MINUTES





AND MY  
OLDER  
SISTER  
JUST  
CAME  
HOME.



MOM WON'T  
STOP CRYING.  
DAD IS  
CONSOLING  
HER.



THEY'RE  
ALL SO  
SAD  
ABOUT  
LOSING  
ME.

THEY WON'T  
HAVE TIME  
TO BE SAD  
OVER MY  
DEATH.



BUT TOMORROW  
ABOUT THIS  
TIME THEY WILL  
ALL BE BUSY  
PREPARING  
THE FUNERAL.

MY DEATH  
FOR NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
WILL BE THE  
TALK OF  
THE TOWN.

THEN MY  
RELATIVES  
WILL GATHER,  
AND THE  
FUNERAL  
WILL BEGIN.



WHAT  
IN THE  
WORLD  
HAVE I  
BEEN  
LIVING FOR  
ALL THIS  
TIME?

HOW  
RIDICU-  
LOUS.



...I STILL  
HAVEN'T  
PREPARED  
MY DEATH  
PHOTO.



Name

Tak.

COME  
TO  
THINK  
OF IT...

Date of Birth  
19XX Year XX Month XX Date

Place of Registry  
XX Prefecture XX City XX Block XX

Current Address  
XX Prefecture XX City XX Block XX

...follows: 20XX Year XX Month XX Day



\*Ikeyama Photo Studio





IT'S  
BEEN A  
LONG  
TIME.









SO YOU  
JUST  
HAPPENED  
TO VISIT.



I CAME TO  
ASK YOU A  
FAVOR, MR.  
IKEYAMA.



WELL,  
LHM...

I  
SHOULDN'T  
TELL  
HIM.



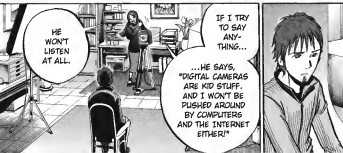
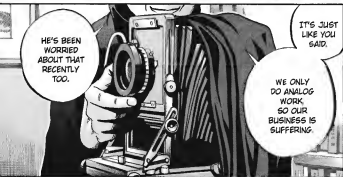


I NEED A  
PORTRAIT  
OF MYSELF  
FOR A  
CLASS  
REUNION  
BOOKLET.



...YOU  
CAN DO  
THAT,  
CAN'T  
YOU?

HIROKO  
...





EVERY-  
WHERE  
IS  
DIGITAL  
NOW.

THAT'S  
NOT  
TRUE.



AT THE  
TIME, I  
WAS BEING  
INFLUENCED  
BY THE  
SCHOOL...



WELL I'VE  
CHANGED  
MY MIND  
ABOUT  
THAT.

OH.



HOW?



WHICH  
IS WHY  
I THINK  
ANALOG  
COULD  
SELL  
WELL.

YEAH  
...



THANK  
YOU FOR  
YOUR CONCERN.



I WISH  
PEOPLE IN  
THIS TOWN  
KNEW MORE  
ABOUT  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY.



I  
DON'T  
KNOW.



YOU MUST  
HAVE A  
LOT OF  
PREPARA-  
TIONS TO  
MAKE.



YES.



...MR.  
IKEYAMA'S  
GOING  
INTO THE  
HOSPITAL  
TOMORROW?



BY  
THE  
WAY  
...







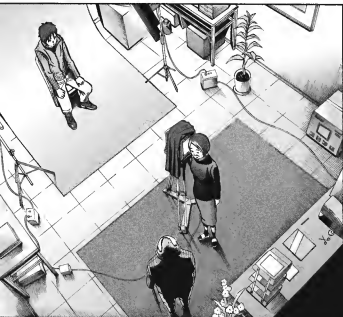


NO.



THANK  
YOU.

THAT'S  
ENOUGH,  
MRS.  
IKEYAMA.



DEAR  
...?



YOU  
LOOKED  
TENSE.



...BUT THAT  
DREAM WILL  
NEVER  
COME  
TRUE.

I USED  
TO THINK  
I WOULD  
WORK  
HERE...



DON'T  
EVER  
DIS-  
APPEAR.

THIS IS  
WHERE  
I GOT  
STARTED.





THIS  
SURE  
BRINGS  
BACK  
MEMORIES...















I'VE  
ALREADY  
DECIDED...

...TO  
CLOSE  
THE  
SHOP.



CLOSE  
THE  
SHOP?!

TIME UNTIL DEATH:  
15 HOURS 11 MINUTES



TO  
TELL THE  
TRUTH...  
I'M JUST  
TIRED.





Dign. Martinez

I'M SURE  
THERE'S  
A WAY TO  
KEEP THE  
STORE IN  
BUSINESS.

WHY  
IS HE  
QUITTING?

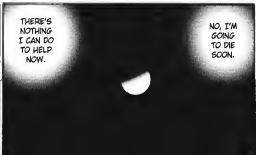


IF HE  
LEFT IT  
TO ME, I  
COULD  
DO IT.



THERE'S  
NOTHING  
I CAN DO  
TO HELP  
NOW.

NO, I'M  
GOING  
TO DIE  
SOON.



THAT  
SHOP  
WAS MY  
DREAM.

BUT I  
COULDN'T  
LET THAT  
SHOP  
CLOSE.



...TO  
THAT  
SHOP.

池山写真館

I  
OWED  
MY  
LIFE...

\* Ikeyama Photo Studio

PHOTOGRAPHY  
FASCINATED ME.  
I NEEDED MR.  
IKEYAMA TO  
KEEP THAT  
FASCINATION  
ALIVE.



IF IT DIS-  
APPEARED,  
MY LIFE  
WOULD  
MEAN  
NOTHING.

I HAVE  
TO DO  
SOME-  
THING.



I CAN'T  
DIE  
LIKE  
THIS.





Ikeyama Photo Studio







HMM,  
YOU LOOK  
TENSE.

THIS  
WON'T  
MAKE A  
GOOD  
DEATH  
PHOTO.



IS  
THAT  
THE  
MIKON?

TAKA?

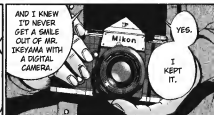


...



BUT IT'LL  
TAKE  
MORE...

...TO  
DRAW  
OUT HIS  
PERSONALITY.



AND I KNEW  
I'D NEVER  
GET A SMILE  
OUT OF MR.  
IKEYAMA WITH  
A DIGITAL  
CAMERA.

YES.

I  
KEPT  
IT.



CHAK





\*Ikeyama Photo Studio



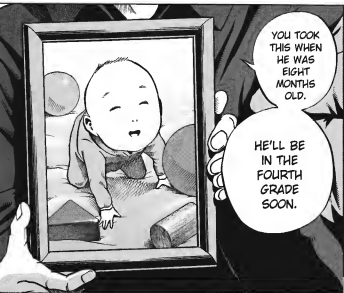


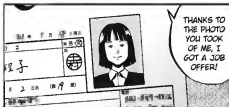
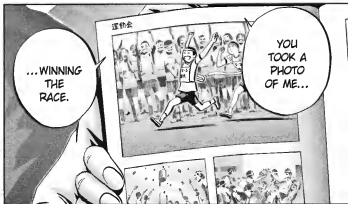




\*Omiai photo: Picture used to introduce prospective dates.





















HUH...?



IS  
THAT...  
TRUE?



YESTER-  
DAY...  
...YOU  
SAID  
ANALOG  
STILL  
HAS A  
CHANCE.



IF...  
IT'S ALL  
RIGHT  
WITH  
YOU...



...THEN  
I WANT  
YOU...  
...TO  
LEND ME  
YOUR  
WISDOM.



IF...  
...IT  
IS...



...WOULD  
YOU...

...WORK  
HERE?





\*Ikegama Photo Shop









...FOR  
VALLING  
ME.

THANK  
YOU,  
MR.  
IKE-  
YAMA...



IT HAS  
BEEN MY  
DREAM  
FOR SO  
LONG.

I WOULD BE  
SO HAPPY  
TO WORK  
HERE.



YOU GAVE  
ME A  
WONDER-  
FUL GIFT.

THANKS  
TO YOU,  
MY LIFE  
HAS BEEN  
FULL OF  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY.



IT  
TRULY  
WAS  
PRE-  
CIOUS.

I WON'T  
BE ABLE  
TO WORK  
HERE, OR  
EVEN TAKE  
PHOTOS.

BUT I'M  
GOING  
TO LEAVE  
SOON.

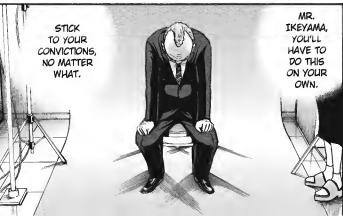


SO I  
CAN'T  
HELP  
YOU ANY-  
MORE.



STICK  
TO YOUR  
CONVICTIONS,  
NO MATTER  
WHAT.

MR.  
IKEYAMA,  
YOU'LL  
HAVE TO  
DO THIS  
ON YOUR  
OWN.







...WANT  
MY  
HELP...

IF YOU  
REALLY  
DO...



...MAKE  
THIS  
SHOP...

...COM-  
PLETELY  
DIGITAL.





...BUT WHEN  
THERE ARE  
NO PRODUCTS  
AND PARTS,  
YOU'LL HAVE  
NO FUTURE.

I UNDER-  
STAND  
YOUR  
CONVIC-  
TIONS...



BESIDES,  
THESE DAYS,  
YOU CAN'T  
EVEN DO  
BUSINESS  
WITHOUT A  
COMPUTER.



IF YOU  
WANT  
MY HELP,  
ABANDON  
ANALOG  
RIGHT  
NOW.



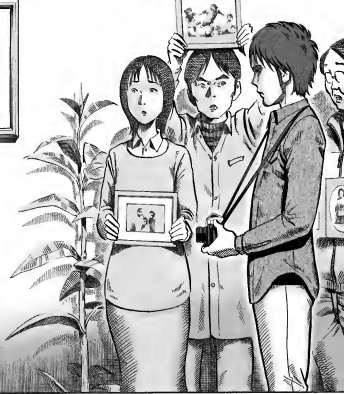
IF YOU  
KEEP  
INSISTING  
ON  
ANALOG...

...YOU'LL  
GO UNDER  
EVEN IF  
I'M HERE.



...I  
WON'T  
WORK  
HERE.

IF YOU  
CAN'T  
DO  
THAT...



NOW,  
MR.  
IKE-  
YAMA...



RIGHT.  
IT'S FOR THE  
SHOP.

MR.  
IKEYAMA,  
DIGITAL  
ISN'T  
SO BAD.





...ABOUT  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY.



...SHOW  
ME YOUR  
CONVIC-  
TIONS...

...IN  
FRONT  
OF  
EVERY-  
ONE...



...



MR.  
IKE-  
YAMA.

MR.  
IKE-  
YAMA.



DON'T BE  
RIDICULOUS.



I...



DO YOU  
TAKE ME  
FOR AN  
AMATEUR?

DIGITAL?





IT'S  
MY  
SHOP  
...



...ON  
MY  
OWN.

VEEN







THE  
TOWNSPEOPLE  
GATHERED FOR  
HIS FUNERAL,  
AND THE DEATH  
PHOTO TAKEN  
BY KUNIO  
IKEYAMA  
ADORNED THE  
ALTAR.

LATER, TAKAAKI  
MORISAWA  
WENT HOME AND  
EXPIRED IN THE  
COMPANY OF  
HIS FAMILY, AT  
THE SCHEDULED  
TIME OF DEATH.

HE WAS MORE SHOCKED THAN ANYONE EXPECTED, BUT HIS NEWLY MENDED HEART WAS ABLE TO WITHSTAND IT.

KUNIO IKEYAMA LEARNED OF TAKAAKI'S DEATH TEN DAYS AFTER HIS OPERATION.

IN THE END, THE DEATH PHOTO TAKEN BY TAKAAKI NEVER FULFILLED ITS ROLE.

EVER SINCE, HE HAS BEEN IN INCREDIBLY GOOD CONDITION.

Musashigawa Ward Office

BUT I THINK IT MUST BE ROUGH MAKING IT ON ANALOG ALONE.

I HAVEN'T LOOKED INTO IT.

AND HOW IS THE PHOTO STUDIO DOING?

THOUGH I HATE TO SEE OLD SKILLS ABANDONED.

INDEED.





I'M  
PREPARED  
FOR THE  
WORST,  
BUT I KEEP  
TELLING  
MYSELF...

MY TIME WITH  
NANAKO KUBO...  
AND THE  
DISCUSSIONS  
WE HAD....  
MIGHT BE  
MY UNDOING.



...TO  
JUST  
ACT  
NORMAL.



YOU MUST  
BE KENGO  
FUJIMOTO  
FROM THE CIVIL  
REGISTRATION  
SECTION.

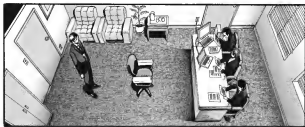
YES.



PARDON  
ME.



COME  
IN.





...WILL  
I BE  
ABLE TO  
ACT LIKE  
EVERY-  
THING'S  
NORMAL?

UNDER  
HER  
PIERCING,  
COLD  
GAZE...



"Keyama Photo Shop



...BUT  
DEATH  
PHOTOS ARE  
USUALLY  
A LITTLE  
MORE  
CHEERFUL..

IT  
CERTAINLY  
DOES  
SHOW  
YOUR  
PERSON-  
ALITY...



YOU  
TRULY  
ARE  
STUB-  
BORN.

I SEE.  
STICKING  
WITH  
ANALOG  
WILL BE  
HARD.

YOU'LL  
NEED  
ENCOURAGE-  
MENT.



THIS ONE  
ENCOURAGES  
ME TO  
KEEP ON  
LIVING.



WHAT?

I'VE HAD  
PLENTY OF  
CHEERFUL  
PHOTOS  
TAKEN.



MY  
CUSTOMERS  
ARE PEOPLE  
WHO UNDER-  
STAND THAT.

...BUT ONLY  
ANALOG  
ALLOWS  
YOU TO  
PERFECT  
THE ART.

I SUPPOSE  
DIGITAL  
PHOTO-  
GRAPHY  
HAS ITS  
BENEFITS...

HMPH.



BUT THERE ARE  
STILL PLENTY OF  
ANALOG-LOVERS  
AROUND THE  
COUNTRY WHO  
ARE FAITHFUL  
TO TRUE  
PHOTOGRAPHY.

THAT'S  
RIGHT.

BECAUSE  
NO ONE IN  
THIS TOWN  
UNDER-  
STANDS.



...BUT  
I DON'T  
SEE ANY  
CUSTOM-  
ERS.

THAT  
SOUNDS  
GOOD...



HOW  
DO THEY  
GET  
HERE?

AROUND  
THE  
COUNTRY?

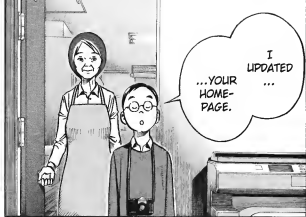


THE  
INTERNET.



Letters: IkeYama Photo Studio







\*New Musashigawa Station



Episode 14 The Dream I Tried to Make Real Act 1







I NEED TO GET READY FOR UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMS SOON.

NO WAY! WHY?



I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GOING TO DO THAT.



BUT I'M GOING TO TAKE OVER MY FATHER'S CRAM SCHOOL, SO I NEED TO GRADUATE FROM A GOOD SCHOOL.

YEAH.



SOON? WE'RE STILL IN TENTH GRADE.



YEAH.

HUH? A DANCE STUDIO?

WELL...

...THINGS HAVE CHANGED.



ARE YOU JUST TRYING ...

...TO GET ME TO TAKE ON THE SCHOOL?



YOU COULD MAKE IT INTO A DANCE STUDIO.

I WAS THINKING ABOUT CLOSING A ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR.



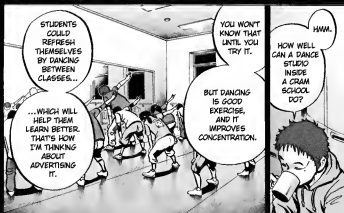


SOME ARE  
USING EMPTY  
CLASSROOMS  
FOR SIDE  
BUSINESSES  
LIKE TRAVEL  
AGENCIES OR  
HOSTESS  
BARS.

WITH ALL  
THE MERGERS  
AND BUYOUTS,  
THEY'RE  
DWINDLING  
FAST.

THESE  
DAYS, CRAM  
SCHOOLS ARE  
SCRAMBLING  
FOR  
STUDENTS.

NO.



STUDENTS  
COULD  
REFRESH  
THEMSELVES  
BY DANCING  
BETWEEN  
CLASSES...

...WHICH WILL  
HELP THEM  
LEARN BETTER.  
THAT'S HOW  
I'M THINKING  
ABOUT  
ADVERTISING  
IT.

YOU WON'T  
KNOW THAT  
UNTIL YOU  
TRY IT.

BUT DANCING  
IS GOOD  
EXERCISE,  
AND IT  
IMPROVES  
CONCENTRATION.

HMM.

HOW WELL  
CAN A DANCE  
STUDIO  
INSIDE  
A CRAM  
SCHOOL  
DO?



SOME PRIVATE  
HIGH SCHOOLS  
ARE ACTUALLY  
INTRODUCING  
CLASSES  
IN HIP-HOP  
DANCE...

...SO IT'S  
PERFECT  
TIMING.



OF COURSE, YOU'D HAVE TO HELP OUT WITH THE CRAM SCHOOL TOO.

I'D LIKE TO LEAVE THE DANCE STUDIO TO YOU.



THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON.

SO I WANT YOU TO GRADUATE FROM A GOOD SCHOOL.



...I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ME TO CONCENTRATE ON STUDYING RIGHT NOW.

SO WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE...

I GUESS SO.

YOUR FATHER'S VERY UNDERSTANDING.



BESIDES, YOUR BREAKING IS GETTING GOOD.

OH, OF COURSE!

THERE'S NO REASON YOU SHOULD QUIT TOO.

WELL...

...I'M GOING TO KEEP DANCING HERE LIKE THIS.

OH, I SEE.





MY MUSCLES  
HURT, AND  
I'M COVERED  
IN SCRAPES,  
BUT I FEEL  
GOOD.

EVERY TIME  
I DANCE, IT  
FEELS LIKE  
MY WHOLE  
BODY  
REGENERATES.

DANCING  
HELPS  
ME FEEL  
ALIVE.



IT'S YOUR  
FAULT,  
SO TAKE  
RESPONSI-  
BILITY.

I'M  
ADDICTED  
TO IT.



PLEASE.



ALL  
RIGHT,  
KATSU-  
NORI?

I'LL BE  
HERE  
DANCING.

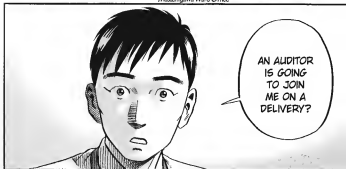
REALLY,  
JUST  
WHEN  
YOU FEEL  
LIKE IT.



OKAY,  
BUT ONLY  
WHEN  
I FEEL  
LIKE IT.



Musashigawa Ward Office



JUST ONCE. SHE SAYS SHE WANTS TO CHECK YOUR DELIVERY WORK.

YES.



YOU TOO?



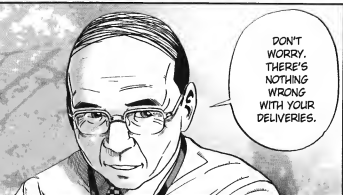
ALL STAFF MEMBERS ARE HAVING THEIR WORK CHECKED.

SO YOU  
MAY BE  
CHECKED  
MORE  
CLOSELY  
THAN OTHER  
STAFF  
MEMBERS.

IKIGAMI  
DELIVERY  
IS AN  
INCREDIBLY  
IMPORTANT  
RESPONSIBILITY.



IT'S  
TEMPORARY,  
SO LET'S  
HANG IN  
THERE.



DON'T  
WORRY.  
THERE'S  
NOTHING  
WRONG  
WITH YOUR  
DELIVERIES.



I  
BELIEVE  
THAT  
MYSELF.

THERE'S  
NO  
PROBLEM  
WITH  
ME.



YES?

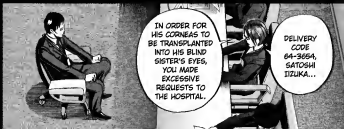
BY THE WAY, MR. FUJIMOTO.

BUT DURING MY THOUGHT EXAM THE OTHER DAY, THE CHIEF EXAMINER GRILLED ME OVER PAST MISTAKES.



...SEVERELY REPRIMANDED FOR OVER-INVOLVEMENT WITH A CHOSEN.

YOU WERE ONCE...



IN ORDER FOR HIS CORNEAS TO BE TRANSPLANTED INTO HIS BLIND SISTER'S EYES, YOU MADE EXCESSIVE REQUESTS TO THE HOSPITAL.

DELIVERY CODE 64-3654, SATOSHI IIZUKA...







THAT'S WHY  
BEING SELECTED  
AS A CHOSEN  
WAS A GREAT  
HONOR FOR HIM.



HE DIDN'T  
JUST SAVE  
HIS SISTER.  
HE SAVED  
THE FUTURE  
OF THIS  
COUNTRY.



...DO YOU  
TRULY  
BELIEVE IN  
THE EFFICACY  
OF THE  
NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
ACT?

MR.  
FUJII-  
MOTO  
...



THE NATIONAL  
WELFARE ACT  
IS THE VERY  
FOUNDATION  
OF OUR  
NATION'S  
GREATNESS.

OF  
C-COURSE.

...BUT  
NEXT  
IS THE  
DELIVERY  
CHECK.



I SPOKE  
PASSIONATELY  
ABOUT MY  
REVERENCE FOR  
THE NATION AND  
SOMEHOW MADE  
IT THROUGH  
THE EXAM...

WE'RE  
DOUBTING  
EVERYONE  
AND KEEPING  
OUR  
DISTANCE  
FROM EACH  
OTHER.



THANKS TO THE  
EXAMINERS, THE  
ATMOSPHERE  
INSIDE THE OFFICE  
IS TENSE, AND  
COWORKER  
RELATIONSHIPS  
ARE STRAINED.

I FEEL  
UNCOMFORT-  
ABLE, EVEN  
THOUGH I'M  
INNOCENT.



I'VE TURNED  
IN A NATIONAL  
TRAITOR, SO  
WHY SHOULD  
I FALL UNDER  
SUSPICION?



MR. FUJIMOTO,  
YOU STRUGGLE  
HARD IN YOUR  
OFFICIAL  
POSITION TO  
BELIEVE IN  
THE NATIONAL  
WELFARE...

...BUT  
DEEP IN  
YOUR HEART  
YOU DON'T  
BELIEVE  
AT ALL.



I'LL  
SHOW  
THEM I'M  
A MODEL  
MESSENGER.

IF SHE  
WANTS  
TO  
JOIN ME  
ON A  
DELIVERY,  
FINE.



*\*New Musashigawa Station*







ALL  
RIGHT, I  
GUESS.

IT MIGHT  
BE GOOD  
ENOUGH  
FOR THE  
PRELIMS.



YOU NEED  
TO BE IN  
SYNC AND  
PRESENT  
EACH MOVE  
CLEARLY...

BUT WITH  
ONLY THREE  
OF YOU, YOU'LL  
BE OVER-  
SHADOWED BY  
THE LARGER  
GROUPS.



AS SOON AS  
THE SPIN IS  
ABOUT TO STOP,  
YOU NEED TO  
LET GO WITH  
BOTH HANDS  
AND PREPARE  
FOR THE NEXT  
MOVE.

TANIZAKI,  
YOU'RE  
STILL  
SLOW  
COMING  
OUT OF A  
BACKSPIN.



FOR A SWIPE,  
YOU NEED TO  
KEEP YOUR  
ARMS, LEGS,  
AND BODY  
SQUARE LIKE  
A BRACKET AS  
YOU SPIN, OR  
IT'S TOO LOOSE.



KOIKE, YOUR  
BODY'S A  
LITTLE TOO  
EXTENDED  
WHEN YOU  
DO A SWIPE.

OH,  
GOT  
IT.



KATSUNORI,  
HOW  
ABOUT  
ME?

OKAY.





YOU'VE  
GOT  
GOOD  
FORM.

NOBOD,  
YOU'RE  
OKAY.



RIGHT.  
MY  
AXIS  
HAND.

GET YOUR  
ELBOW  
PLANTED  
FIRMLY  
UNDER THE  
CENTER OF  
YOUR BODY.

BUT WHEN YOU  
DO A WINDMILL,  
THE PLACEMENT  
OF YOUR AXIS  
HAND STILL  
ISN'T RIGHT.



BYE,  
GUYS.

KEEP  
UP THE  
GOOD  
WORK.

BUT ALL  
THREE OF  
YOU ARE  
MUCH  
BETTER  
THAN  
BEFORE.



LATER!

THANKS,  
KATSU-  
NORI!



PERFORMANCES  
DEMAND SOLID  
TECHNIQUE.  
YEP.

WE  
CAN'T  
IMPROVE  
ON  
ENERGY  
ALONE.



WITHOUT HIS  
ADVICE, WE'D  
HAVE FAILED  
AT THE VIDEO  
REVIEW.

KATSU-  
NORI IS  
SPOT-ON  
AS  
USUAL.



CAN WE  
START  
PRACTICING  
ON OUR  
OWN  
SOON?

NOBUO  
...



AND TO BE  
HONEST,  
HE'S KIND OF  
ARROGANT.

...BUT I  
THINK WE  
CAN DO IT  
ON OUR  
OWN NOW.

KATSUNORI'S  
ADVICE  
HAS BEEN  
HELPFUL...



HEY?





I JUST  
NEED TO  
PRACTICE  
EVERY  
DAY.

I DON'T  
NEED HIM  
TO TELL  
ME WHAT  
TO DO.

EVERYTHING  
KATSUNORI  
SAYS IS ON  
DVDs AND  
IN LESSON  
BOOKS.



I AGREE  
WITH  
KOIKE.



HIS  
BREAKING  
IS AWESOME.

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT?



RIGHT,  
RIGHT.

CAN HE  
EVEN  
REALLY  
DANCE?  
WE'VE  
NEVER  
SEEN  
IT.



...



WITH  
THAT  
FLABBY  
BODY?



IT'S A LOT  
HARDER TO  
DANCE AND  
DO EXAM  
PREP.

THAT'S  
WHY HE'S  
GOING TO  
COLLEGE,  
RIGHT?

I'M  
JEALOUS,  
THOUGH. HE  
GETS HIS  
OWN DANCE  
STUDIO.





STREET  
DANCING

...

...ISN'T  
SOMETHING  
YOU DO IN  
SCHOOL.

I WONDER  
ABOUT  
THAT  
DANCE  
STUDIO  
THOUGH.



...IT'S  
TIME TO  
MOVE ON  
FROM  
KATSU-  
NORI.

ANYWAY,  
NOBUO...



...

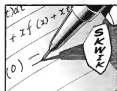


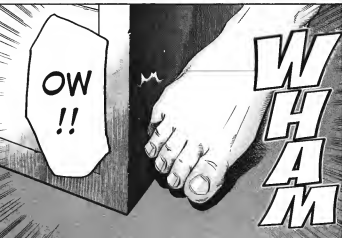
WE'VE  
GOTTA  
PERFECT  
OUR  
DANCING  
ON OUR  
OWN.

YEAH.



NO, WE  
STILL  
NEED  
HIM.







ASIDE FROM GOING TO SEE NOBUO AND THOSE GUYS PRACTICE, I JUST GO BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME.

MY LIFE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE I QUIT DANCING.



MY GRADES HAVE SLOWLY IMPROVED, AND I'M ONE STEP AWAY FROM PASSING THE ENTRANCE EXAM FOR THE SCHOOL OF MY CHOICE...

I'VE  
GAINED  
25 KILOS  
IN A  
YEAR.



THE STRESS  
OF STUDYING  
MAKES ME  
SNACK, AND  
I NEVER  
EXERCISE.



MEANWHILE, NOBUO  
AND THOSE GUYS  
HAVE BEEN  
PRACTICING THE  
WHOLE TIME AND  
ARE ABOUT TO  
PERFORM IN THEIR  
FIRST DANCE  
CONTEST.



...AND  
ACTING  
LIKE I  
CAN  
STILL  
DANCE.



RIGHT NOW,  
I'M JUST  
FLAUNTING MY  
KNOWLEDGE  
IN ORDER TO  
PRESERVE  
MY PRIDE...



VEEN



WHEN I  
SHOULD  
ACTUALLY  
BE  
DANCING!!



I'LL  
CATCH  
UP WITH  
THEM.

ARGH

I'M GOING  
TO START  
DANCING  
AGAIN AS  
SOON AS  
EXAMS  
ARE OVER.



HELLO?

TANI-  
ZAKI  
...?

RRRRRR



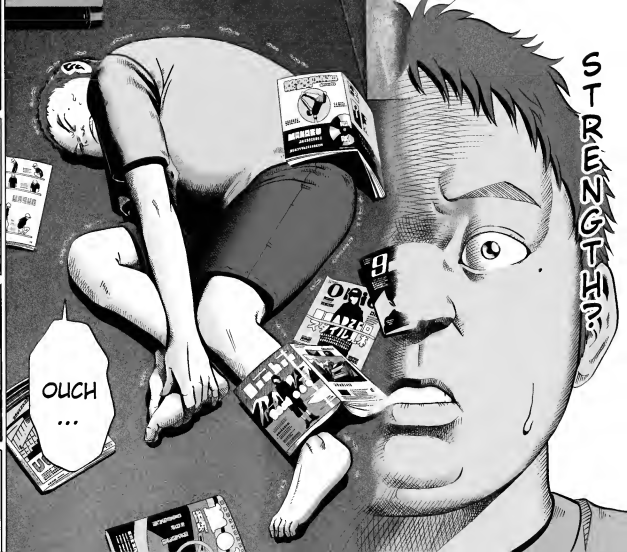
Sign Hospital



















I MAY BE  
FAT, BUT  
I'VE GOT  
PRIDE.



I'M TOO OUT  
OF SHAPE  
TO DANCE IN  
FRONT OF  
OTHERS.





YEAH.

THEY WERE  
GUYS  
FROM A  
STREET-  
DANCING  
GROUP.

...THE OTHER  
NIGHT AN BIGAKU  
SEMINAR STUDENT  
RAN INTO TROUBLE  
WITH SOME  
DELINQUENTS ON  
THE WAY HOME  
FROM CRAM  
SCHOOL.

OH,  
BY THE  
WAY...



THEY  
WEREN'T  
YOUR  
FRIENDS,  
THOUGH,  
KATSU-  
NORI.



HUH?!



WHAT  
WERE  
THEY  
THINKING?

THEY WANTED  
TO PRACTICE  
IN A STUDIO,  
BUT THEY  
DIDN'T HAVE  
ANY MONEY.

THEY  
ROBBED  
A KID.



...IT WOULD  
HAVE  
DAMAGED  
OUR CRAM  
SCHOOL'S  
REPUTATION.

IF YOU  
WERE  
STILL  
DOING  
IT...

I'M GLAD  
YOU QUIT  
STREET  
DANCING,  
KATSUNORI.

YEAH.





SMILE

IF THEY  
DID, THE  
TOWN  
WOULD BE  
SAFER...

...AND MORE  
STUDENTS  
WOULD COME  
TO THE DANCE  
STUDIO WE'RE  
GOING TO OPEN.

TO DAD,  
STREET  
DANCING IS  
JUST A WAY  
TO MAKE  
MONEY.

I  
KNEW  
IT.

HE'S  
JUST  
USING  
ME...

GOOD  
LUCK  
WITH THE  
DANCE  
STUDIO.

YOUR  
FATHER'S  
VERY  
UNDER-  
STANDING.



...SO  
THE  
SCHOOL  
CAN  
SURVIVE.



YES?



DING DONG



YES  
IT IS,  
BUT...



IS  
THIS THE  
RESIDENCE  
OF  
KATSUNORI  
TSUMURA?

GOOD  
MORN-  
ING.

I'M  
FUJIMOTO  
FROM THE  
MUSASHIGAWA  
WARD  
OFFICE.



KACHAK

I'M HERE TO  
DELIVER AN  
IKIGAMI FOR  
KATSUNORI.



TIME UNTIL DEATH:  
23 HOURS 59 MINUTES





Episode 14 The Dream I Tried to Make Real Act 2



...YOU  
WILL BEGIN  
RECEIVING  
THE NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
BEREAVEMENT  
PENSION THE  
NEXT MONTH.

IF YOU APPLY  
AT THE WARD  
OFFICE OR  
NATIONAL WELFARE  
SERVICE CENTER  
WITHIN THREE  
MONTHS OF  
HIS DEATH...

KATSUNORI  
WILL DIE  
FOR THE  
NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
TOMORROW  
MORNING  
AT TEN.



AS HIS FAMILY, YOU  
WOULD THEN BE  
FINED AN AMOUNT IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH  
THE RESULTING  
SENTENCE FOR  
HIS CRIMES,  
SO PLEASE  
BE CAREFUL.

HOW-  
EVER  
...

...SHOULD  
KATSUNORI  
ENGAGE IN ANY  
CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR  
BEFORE HIS DEATH,  
YOU WILL LOSE  
THE RIGHT TO  
RECEIVE THE  
PENSION.



PARTICIPATING  
ORGANIZATIONS  
FROM WHICH HE  
MAY RECEIVE  
SERVICE ARE  
LISTED IN THIS  
GUIDEBOOK.

...SERVES  
AS A TICKET  
ALLOWING  
HIM TO USE  
PUBLIC  
FACILITIES  
AND TRANS-  
PORTATION  
FOR FREE.

DURING  
THE 24  
HOURS  
UNTIL  
KATSUNORI'S  
DEATH, THIS  
IKIGAMI...



I'M SORRY  
FOR THE  
INCONVENIENCE,  
BUT WOULD  
YOU PLEASE  
SIGN HERE?

YES.

THE DELIVERY  
WAS RIGHT ON  
TIME AND YOU  
FOLLOWED  
THE CORRECT  
PROCEDURE.

?!

HOWEVER,  
AGAIN,  
SOMETHING  
IMPORTANT  
IS MISSING.

THE FAMILY  
IS OFFERING  
THE LIFE OF  
THEIR BELOVED  
FAMILY  
MEMBER...

...SO YOU  
MUST  
EXPRESS  
HOW  
THAT IS  
A NOBLE  
THING.

YOU NEVER  
MENTIONED  
THAT DYING  
FOR THE  
NATIONAL  
WELFARE IS AN  
HONORABLE  
DEATH...

...AND  
INTEGRAL TO  
THE SURVIVAL  
AND HEALTH  
OF THE  
NATION.

B-BUT...  
I JUST...

...BUT I  
COULDN'T  
SEE YOUR  
ENTHUSIASM  
FOR THE  
NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
ACT.

NOTHING  
WRONG  
WITH HOW  
YOU CARRY  
OUT YOUR  
DUTIES  
THEM-  
SELVES...

...



...I  
WANT TO  
CHECK  
THEM.

MR. FUJIMOTO,  
FROM NOW ON,  
BEFORE YOU  
SUBMIT YOUR  
REPORTS  
TO SECTION  
CHIEF ISHII...



I MAY HAVE  
MADE LITTLE  
SLIPS, BUT  
THERE'S  
NOTHING  
WRONG WITH  
MY THINKING.

I BELIEVE IN  
THE NATIONAL  
WELFARE, AND  
I'M CARRYING  
OUT MY DUTIES  
FAITHFULLY.

3-JUST  
WAIT A  
SECOND.



DO NOT  
DELAY IN  
OBEYING  
OUR  
ORDERS.

THAT IS  
FOR THE  
EXAMINATION  
BOARD TO  
DETERMINE.



...





TIME LEFT:  
20 HOURS 18 MINUTES







HEH



IT'S  
ALMOST  
FUNNY.

I WANTED  
TO DANCE  
MORE. I  
WANTED  
TO GET  
BETTER.



IF I HAD  
KNOWN THIS  
WOULD  
HAPPEN,  
I WOULD  
HAVE KEPT  
DANCING.



I THINK IT  
WOULD BE  
BETTER  
FOR ME TO  
CONCENTRATE  
ON STUDYING  
RIGHT NOW.

BUT...



I WANT  
THE  
LAST  
YEAR...



SKRF



NOW I  
CAN'T  
UNDO  
IT.

RRIP  
RRIP RRIP



I QUIT  
DANCING  
TO SAVE  
THAT  
STUPID  
CRAM  
SCHOOL.



...OF  
MY  
LIFE  
BACK!!

**NINGH**



THE  
PRELIMINAR-  
IES ARE  
TODAY...



PLEASE,  
LEND  
US YOUR  
STRENGTH.



ONLY YOU  
KNOW THE  
CHOREO-  
GRAPHY.

NOBUO  
SAID YOUR  
BREAKING IS  
INCREDIBLE.







SO  
THEY'RE  
PRACTICING  
IN THE  
PARK  
AGAIN  
TODAY.

THEY SAID  
THERE ARE  
OTHER  
CONTESTS.

BUT THE  
OTHER  
TWO  
STOPPED  
ME.



WELL, I  
GOTTA  
GO.



YEAH.

YOU  
SHOULD  
FOCUS ON  
HEALING.

THAT'S  
RIGHT.



NOBILLO.

HW?

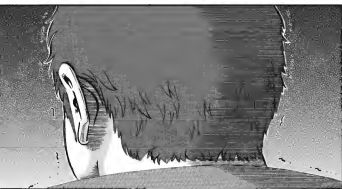


OKAY,  
THANKS.



KEEP  
UP THE  
GOOD  
WORK.







I CAN'T  
TELL  
HIM I  
GOT AN  
IKIGAMI.

I  
CAN'T  
TELL  
HIM.



ME DYING  
NOW  
WOULD  
BE TOO  
PATHETIC.



I QUIT  
DANCING,  
GOT FAT,  
AND CAN'T  
DANCE  
ANYMORE.



I'M  
GOING  
TO STAY  
HOME  
QUIETLY.

IT  
WOULD  
DRIVE  
ME  
CRAZY.



NOBUO  
ADMIRE  
S ME. I  
COULDN'T  
STAND  
HIS PITY.



IF ONLY  
THEY COULD  
JUST GET RID  
OF ALL THOSE  
GUYS DANCING  
ON THE  
STREETS.

TCH

STAY  
HOME?



IT'S NOT  
EVERY DAY  
YOU GET TO  
PERFORM  
FOR A  
CROWD.

I WAS  
THINKING  
ABOUT  
PARTICIPATING  
IN THE PRELIMS  
ANYWAY.



I'D DO IT  
EVEN IF I  
COULDN'T  
DANCE  
WELL.



THUMP  
THUMP

LEND  
US YOUR  
STRENGTH.

WILL  
YOU  
TAKE  
HIS  
PLACE?

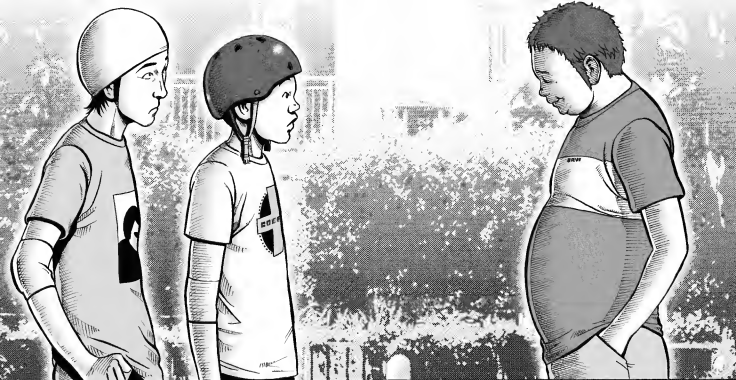


I CAN  
DO IT  
ONE  
LAST  
TIME!

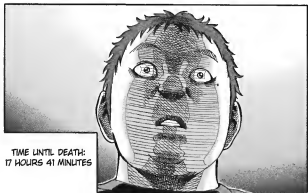














Episode 14 The Dream I Tried to Make Real **Act 3**



WHY THE  
CHANGE  
OF  
HEART?



LAST  
WEEK YOU  
SAID YOU  
WOULDN'T  
DO IT.

BUT NOW ON  
THE VERY DAY  
OF PRELIMS  
YOU *COULD*  
JOIN US  
*SINCE*  
YOU'RE  
HERE?

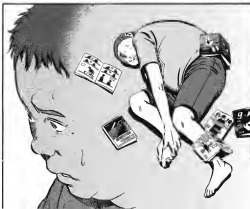


AND  
FINALLY  
DECIDED  
NOT TO  
COMPETE  
THIS TIME.

WE LOOKED  
EVERY-  
WHERE FOR  
A REPLA-  
CEMENT.



DON'T  
DO US  
ANY  
FAVORS.



BESIDES,  
KATSU-  
NORI...  
...CAN  
YOU  
EVEN  
DANCE?











I WANT  
THEM TO  
RECOGNIZE  
ME FOR  
MYSELF.

THE FACT  
THAT I'M  
GOING TO  
DIE HAS  
NOTHING  
TO DO  
WITH IT.



HERE  
I AM,  
ABOUT TO  
WASTE  
MY VERY  
LAST  
CHANCE.



I'VE  
GOTTA  
STUDY.

BUT  
...

I  
COULD  
JOIN  
YOU.





IF I HAD  
BEEN  
HONEST  
ALL ALONG,  
MY LIFE  
WOULD BE  
DIFFERENT  
NOW.

IF I WANT  
TO DANCE  
WITH THEM,  
I SHOULD  
JUST  
SAY SO.



BUT I  
STILL...

...HAVE  
ONE  
LAST  
DAY.



IF  
ONLY I  
COULD  
BREAK...



URGH









WAIT.



HAVE I  
REALLY

...

...LOST  
THE  
ABILITY TO  
DANCE?!



...AND  
HIT MY  
FOOT  
ON THE  
FURNI-  
TURE?

...JUST  
BECAUSE  
I'M  
OUT OF  
PRACTICE

...

CAN I  
REALLY  
SAY I  
CAN'T  
DANCE...





...JUST  
MADE ME  
AFRAID I  
WAS BEING  
LEFT  
BEHIND.

MAYBE  
WATCHING  
THEM  
GET  
BETTER...



...ONE  
YEAR.

IT'S  
ONLY  
BEEN...



...PRACTIC-  
ALLY  
PERFECTLY  
...

I BET I  
CAN DO IT  
BETTER  
THAN  
ANYONE...

I MAY  
STILL BE  
ABLE TO  
DANCE.







OF  
COURSE  
...

...I  
CAN  
DANCE!



AND  
TANI-  
ZAKI...



...YOUNG  
AND OLD  
ALIKE, THE  
JOY OF  
DANCING.

I JUST  
WANT TO  
TEACH  
LOTS OF  
PEOPLE...

YOU SEEM  
SO HUNG  
UP ON MY  
DANCE  
STUDIO.



...PASSESBY  
WON'T  
STARE  
COLDLY  
ANYMORE.

...WHEN  
EVERYONE  
RESPECTS  
DANCING...

BECAUSE  
OF THAT,  
YEARS  
IN THE  
FUTURE...





...AND  
THEY  
WILL  
JOIN  
YOU.

YOUR  
DANCING  
WILL  
INSPIRE  
THEM...



I DON'T  
WANT YOU  
TO GIVE  
UP ON  
THEM.

YOU  
PRACTICED  
HARD  
FOR THE  
PRELIMS,  
RIGHT?



...GOING  
TO  
DIE...

BECAUSE  
I'M...







IF I  
CAN'T  
DANCE,  
I'M  
GONNA  
DIE!!





SO I'LL  
SAY IT  
ONE  
LAST  
TIME...



I'LL TAKE  
YOU ALL  
THE WAY  
TO THE  
FINALS.

I KNOW  
I CAN  
HELP  
YOU.



I  
COULD  
JOIN  
YOU...

...IN THE  
PRELIMS  
TODAY!





New Musugawa Station



TADUW





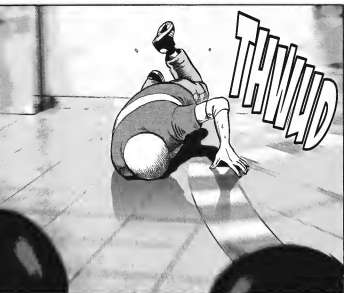
**HAND-  
STAND!**













...BUT  
ONE YEAR  
IS TOO  
LONG.

IT'S NO  
USE...  
I THOUGHT  
I COULD  
STILL  
DANCE...



I CAN'T  
EXPOSE  
MYSELF TO  
ANY MORE  
RIDICULE.

I'M  
HEAVY  
AND  
OUT OF  
BREATH.



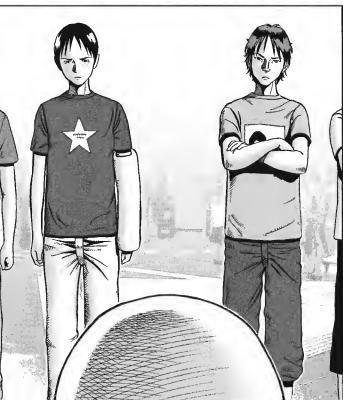
AT  
LEAST  
I TRIED.

I'VE  
DONE  
ENOUGH.



I'LL  
STOP  
HERE.







...STILL  
BELIEVES  
IN ME!

SOME-  
ONE...



LAUGH ALL  
YOU WANT!  
I'M GOING  
TO SEE THIS  
THROUGH TO  
THE END!



IF I QUIT  
NOW, MY  
WHOLE  
LIFE HAS  
BEEN A  
WASTE!



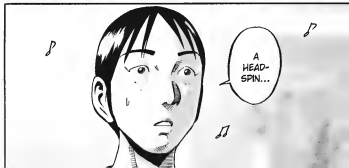
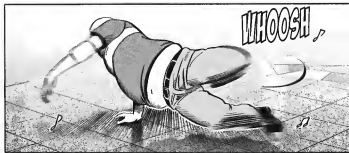
C'MON,  
KATSU-  
NORI...

...GIVE  
IT YOUR  
ALL!



SQUEEZE  
OUT...







THAT'S KATSU-NORI..









I'D LIKE  
TO LEAVE  
THE  
DANCE  
STUDIO  
TO YOU.

I'M ADDICTED  
TO IT. IT'S  
YOUR FAULT,  
SO TAKE  
RESPONSIBILITY.



DO YOU  
STILL  
HAVE  
THAT  
PRIDE?

IF YOU  
CAN  
DANCE,  
LET'S  
SEE IT.





...I CAN  
FORGET  
ABOUT BAD  
THINGS,  
EVEN  
DYING.

AS  
LONG  
AS I'M  
DANC-  
ING...



...BUT  
DANCING  
IS ALL  
I'VE  
GOT.

A LOT  
HAS  
HAPPENED  
...



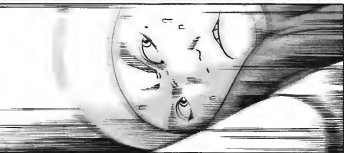
DANCING  
IS EVERY-  
THING  
TO ME.

IT'S  
MY  
LIFE.



A  
WIND-  
MILL...







TH W U D







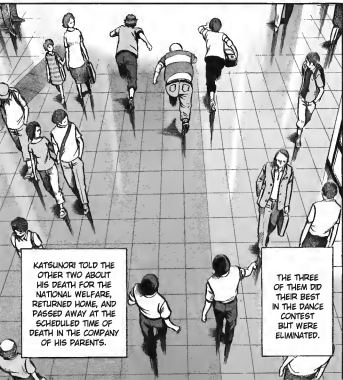








RIGHT.



KATSUNORI TOLD THE OTHER TWO ABOUT HIS DEATH FOR THE NATIONAL WELFARE, RETURNED HOME, AND PASSED AWAY AT THE SCHEDULED TIME OF DEATH IN THE COMPANY OF HIS PARENTS.

THE THREE OF THEM DID THEIR BEST IN THE DANCE CONTEST BUT WERE ELIMINATED.

IT WAS WELL  
RECEIVED, AND  
THE PREJUDICE  
AGAINST STREET  
DANCING AMONG  
RESIDENTS IN  
THE AREA HAS  
GRADUALLY  
LESSENED.



LATER, KATSU-  
NORI'S FATHER,  
KATSUHIKE,  
TURNED ONE  
OF THE CLASS-  
ROOMS IN HIS  
CRAM SCHOOL  
INTO A STUDIO.

EVEN NOW  
THEY RELY ON  
THE ADVICE  
AND BOOKS  
KATSUNORI  
GAVE THEM.



MEANWHILE,  
NOBUO,  
TANIZAKI  
AND KOIKE  
ARE STILL  
DANCING.

Musashigawa Ward Office

TO BE  
HONEST,  
SOMETIMES  
I THINK  
IT'S A  
NUISANCE...



THERE  
ARE  
OTHER  
PLACES  
TO DO  
IT...

I DON'T  
REALLY  
UNDERSTAND  
STREET  
DANCING.



THINKING IT'S  
A NUISANCE  
AND BEING  
THOUGHT  
OF AS A  
NUISANCE...



...ARE ONE  
FORM OF  
COMMUNICATION.

HMM...  
I'M NOT  
PARTICULARLY  
AGAINST IT.



...BUT  
IT LACKS  
"SMELL"  
OR  
"WARMTH."

IT'S  
CONVE-  
NIENT...

THESE DAYS,  
PEOPLE CAN  
CONNECT WITH  
OTHERS WITH-  
OUT REVEALING  
ANYTHING ABOUT  
THEMSELVES.

IT'S PRIMITIVE,  
BUT I THINK  
IT'S A HEALTHY  
AND POWERFUL  
FORM OF  
COMMUNICATION.

THOSE GUYS  
ARE USING  
THEIR  
PHYSICAL  
BODIES TO  
ATTRACT  
ATTENTION.



THAT'S  
WHY STREET  
PERFORMANCE  
ALWAYS  
ENDURES.



...IT'S  
PROOF THAT  
TANGIBLE  
FORMS OF  
COMMUNICATION  
ARE MISSING  
FROM OUR  
SOCIETY.

I  
THINK  
...





...BECAUSE HER  
RELENTLESS  
EXAMINATION  
COULD MAKE  
ME DISCOVER  
CONTRADICTIONS  
IN THE NATIONAL  
WELFARE  
SYSTEM AGAIN.

WHATEVER  
IT IS, HER  
PRESENCE  
IS NOTHING  
BUT TROUBLE  
FOR ME...



BUT IF SHE EXPECTS  
SOMETHING FROM ME,  
SHE WILL ASK ABOUT  
MY "TRUE SELF"--  
WHICH I CAN'T  
CORRECT.

IF I KNEW  
SHE WERE  
SUSPICIOUS, I  
COULD CORRECT  
MY BEHAVIOR  
AND DISPEL  
HER DOUBTS.



**TAK**



THERE  
SHOULDN'T  
BE ANYTHING  
IN MY  
"TRUE SELF"  
TO HIDE,  
BUT...



新武蔵川駅

New Musashigawa Station









BESIDES,  
IF YOU  
PRACTICE  
HERE...

...IT'S A  
NUISANCE  
TO  
PASSERSBY.







...LIKE  
...

...KATSUNORI  
DID.

HIS DANCING MAY  
HAVE PROVED  
THAT AS LONG  
AS YOU HAVE  
PURE PASSION,  
YOU CAN BREAK  
THE "TECHNIQUE"  
AND "NUISANCE"  
BARRIERS.



PEOPLE WHO  
WOULD USUALLY  
JUST PASS  
THROUGH THAT  
STATION STOPPED  
TO WATCH AND  
APPLAUDED  
KATSUNORI'S  
PERFORMANCE  
THAT DAY.

Motoro Mase was born in Aichi in Japan in 1969 and is also the artist of *Kyoichi* and, with Keigo Higashino, *HEADS*, which, like *Ikigami*, was serialized in *Young Sunday*. In 1998, Mase's *AREA* was nominated for Shogakukan's 43rd grand prize for a comic by a new artist.